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2005

PREVIOUSLY IN MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN

"WILD BLUE YONDER"
PART VI OF VI

Peter Parker's life has been turned upside down. His house has been leveled by a super-villain so he's moved his family into a new pad—Avengers Tower…his summer-school teaching job fell through so he's finagled a summer job at the Daily Bugle…the Owl has placed a bounty on his head that The Absorbing Man and his mysterious female consultant are looking to collect…and if that weren't enough, the Bugle's new star reporter, Ethan Edwards, is actually an alien with enough power to conquer the world!

Years ago, a ship delivered baby Ethan to Earth where a kindly couple raised him, unaware of his alien heritage. Now, the Fantastic Four have learned that Ethan is a Skrull orphaned by planet destroyer Galactus! This revelation has sent Ethan into a confused rage, bending his mental stability to the breaking point.

Meanwhile in New York, Spider-Man discovered a new drug being pushed by the Owl and the Absorbing Man's treacherous consultant. She tricked Creel and then had his powdery remains distributed as the drug.

Now, the Absorbing Man has reconstituted and he's not too happy about being smoked up by deadbeat addicts. As Spider-Man confronts the Owl, Creel and Ethan are closing in...

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THE LOUISIANA SWAMPS...
NOT THAT YOU AREN'T THE BRAINS OF THE ORGANIZATION AND ALL, REED...BUT WHAT THE HECK ARE WE DOING OUT HERE IN THE BACK OF THE BACKWOODS?
IT'S NOT MY FAULT YOU PUNCHED THAT SKRULL SPACE CAPSULE FROM IOWA TO THE LOUISIANA SWAMP-LANDS.
BUT SHOULDN'T WE BE PURSUING ETHAN? ANYONE WITH POWERS THAT VAST UNDERGOING AN *IDENTITY CRISIS* IS GOING TO BE A MENACE TO HIMSELF AND OTHERS!
YEAH, AND WHY DIDN'T WE STOP AT A 7-11 FOR BUG SPRAY!
JOHNNY, I'M SURE IF YOU TURN UP YOUR BODY TEMPERATURE ANOTHER SO DEGREES AND ELIMINATE ANY INSECTS--
AH HA! THERE IT IS!
BEFORE ALL HECK BROKE LOOSE, I WAS ON THE VERGE OF GETTING THIS TECHNOLOGY TO TELL ME WHICH POWERS ETHAN WAS ENHANCED WITH ON HIS TRIP TO EARTH. WITH ANY LUCK, WE'LL FIND A WAY TO SHUT THEM OFF.
WHAT ABOUT SPIDER-MAN? SHOULDN'T WE CALL HIM AND TELL HIM TO EXPECT COMPANY?
GOOD IDEA, BEN. I HOPE HE'S NOT TOO BUSY TO TAKE THE CALL.

MEANWHILE, IN NEWYORK...
THWIP
DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY GUNS HAVE BEEN POINTED AT ME? DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA GET THE LUCKY SHOT?
OW! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GOT ME!
YOU FLY SLOWER THAN THE VULTURE!
SHRIK!
NOW YOU WILL LEARN--TO BEWARE THE WRATH OF THE OWL!
GIMME A BREAK.
I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE DAREDEVIL DOESN'T BEAT YOU UP-- A LOT.
AND AS FOR YOU, I WOULDN'T HIT A GIRL.
WHUD
DIRECTLY.

OWL!!!
OH BOY.
UH, CREBL, BEFORE YOU FLY OFF THE HANDLE...
SHADDDDUPPP!
KRUNCH
NOT GOOD.
WHY DON'T I LEAVE YOU TWO TO WORK OUT YOUR FRUSTRATIONS WITH EACH OTHER...

WHAP
NNOOO!!
TOO SLOW!
I'LL RIP THIS PLACE APART, OWL. I OWE YOU PAYBACK *BIG TIME!*
SEE, IF YOU WERE JUST GONNA GIVE HIM A NOOGIE, I'D SAY FINE. BUT *MURDER*, IT'S JUST WRONG.
YEAH? AND *WHO'S* GONNA STOP ME?
EXCUSE ME...

WILD BLUE YONDER

CONCLUSION

REGINALD HUDLIN WRITER	BILLY TAN PENCILS	JON SIBAL INKS	AVALON'S IAN HANNIN COLORS	VC'S CORY PETIT LETTERS	STEVE McNIVEN COVER	CORY SEDLMEIER ASST. EDITOR	AXEL ALONSO EDITOR	JOE QUESADA CHIEF	DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER

YOU TALKING TO ME? OR HIM?
YEAH, AND WHO ARE YOU?
YOU SHUT UP!
YEOW!
LOOK "LEATHERFACE"...OR WHOEVER YOU ARE...I APPRECIATE THE HELP, BUT YOU COULD'VE KILLED HIM.
WHO CARES? WHAT'S THE POINT OF BEING A MASKED VIGILANTE IF YOU CAN'T DO WHAT COPS CAN'T?
WHAM

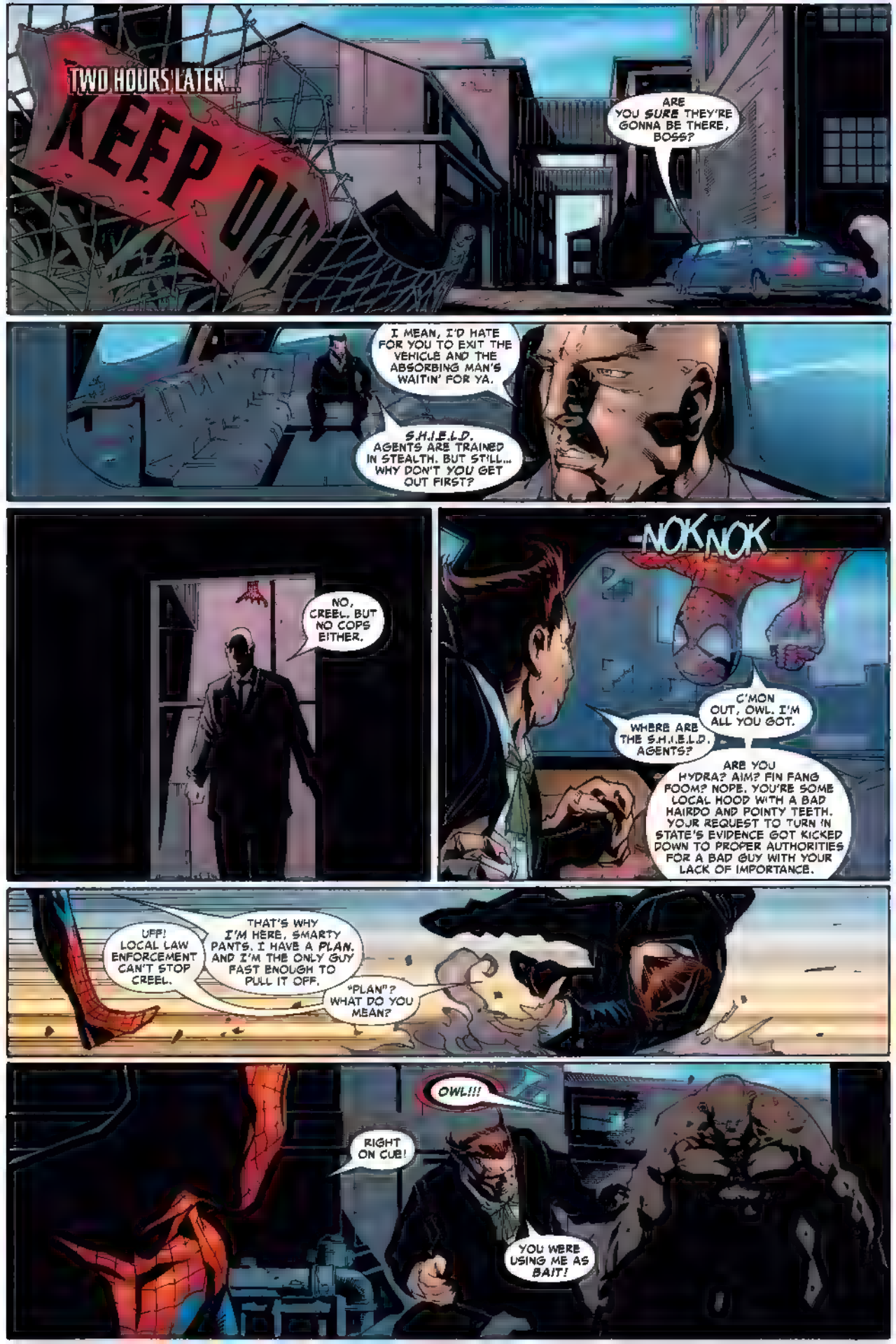
I SEE. A PUNISHER FAN. GUESS THE LEATHER AND JACKBOOTS SHOULD HAVE CLUED ME IN.
I WAS TIRED OF MY COSTUMES RIPPING UP. SO I GOT SOMETHING A LOT STURDIER.
ETHAN!?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DIDN'T RECOGNIZE ME.
AND CALL ME BY MY NEW CODENAME: THE TILLER!
THE "TILLER"?
YOU KNOW, LIKE IN THE BIBLE. I "TILL THE SOIL, SEPARATING THE WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF..."
WITH THAT OUTFIT, YOU'LL PROBABLY END UP BEING CALLED THE GIMP.
"GIMP"?
YOU KNOW, "THE GIMP"...? THE GUY IN THE LEATHER SUIT IN "PULP FICTION"...?
WAS THAT AN R-RATED MOVIE?
UH...SO YOU GONNA HELP ME RESCUE THIS GUY OR WHAT?
I HAVE BIGGER ISSUES THAN HELPING SOME CRIMINAL...
HEY!

UNF! I THOUGHT THAT JERK WOULD NEVER LEAVE!
GREAT. NOW I'VE GOT TO DEAL WITH YOU.
NO TIME FOR THAT NOW. I'M GONNA FIND THE OWL, KILL HIM, THEN COME BACK FOR YOU.
WHERE'S THE WATER MAIN...?
FWOOOSH
HEY--
-GLUG GLUG GLUG-
OH MAN... GUESS THAT'S THAT FOR THE MYSTERY LADY.
WONDER IF SHE TOLD ANY-ONE MY SECRET IDENTITY?
--OKAY, THAT WAS A SELFISH THOUGHT IN THE FACE OF--
RINNNG
RINNNG
HELLO...?
SO YOU BEAT HIM?

THAT YOU, OWL?
OF COURSE, YOU IDIOT.
WHERE ARE YOU CALLING FROM-- TIMBUKTU?
MORE LIKE FORT KNOX. BUT SAME IDEA. SO WHAT'S THE DEAL? DID YOU HANDLE CREEL?
TELL YOU WHAT, LET'S MEET AND WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT.
CLICK
'SCUSE ME, THAT'S YOUR OTHER LINE.
IF I DIDN'T, WE WOULDN'T BE CHATTING, WOULD WE? HOLD ON.
DON'T ANSWER MY PHONE!
HELLO.
SPIDER-MAN? IT'S REED RICHARDS.
I TOLD YOU, I HAVE THIS NEW PROGRAM, AND IT--
HOW DID YOU REACH ME HERE?
CUT TO THE CHASE, REED.
RIGHT. YOUR FRIEND ETHAN-- HE DIDN'T TAKE THE NEWS ABOUT BEING A SKRULL TOO WELL.
GEE. HADN'T NOTICED.
THERE'S MORE WE INTERRUPTED SOME KIND OF MIND-MELD FROM HIS SPACECRAFT. I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE OF THE EXTENT OF IT, BUT I THINK ETHAN MAY HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY BRAINWASHED. ONE THING'S FOR SURE

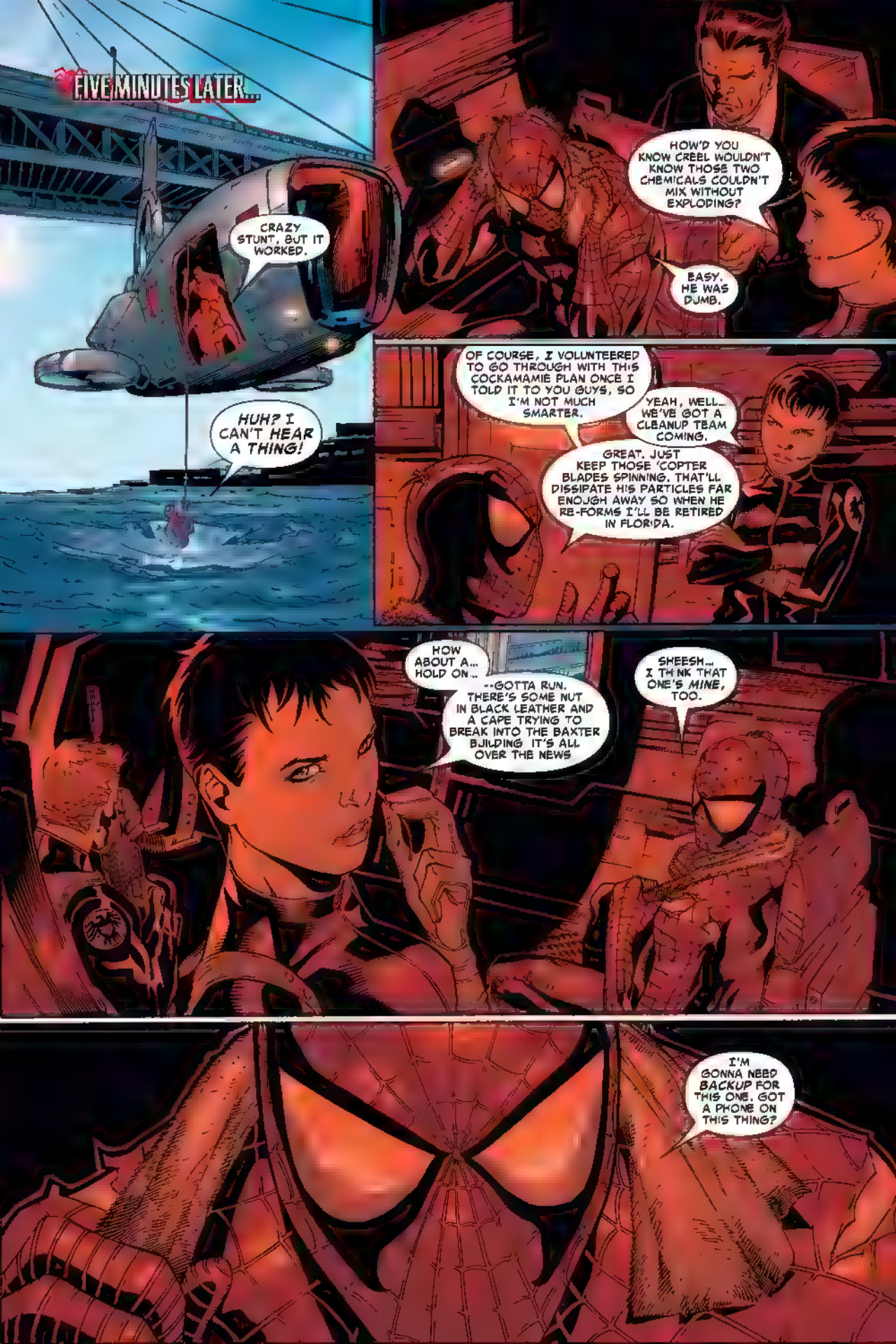
"...HE'S IN A WORLD OF PAIN"
MEANWHILE, AT THE DAILY BUGLE...
UH... ETHAN...?
THEY CALL ME "THE TILLER."
REALLY? THEY DO? WHO?
OR "MORAL-MAN." YOU'RE A GIRL. WHAT DO YOU THINK? WHICH CONVEYS TRUST-WORTHINESS? I WANT TO COME OFF STRONG, BUT NOT POMPOUS
EDWARDS. YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO USE BUGLE PROPERTY UNTIL I GET THAT EXCLUSIVE!
I'M RESEARCHING IT NOW.
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO?
ALRIGHT, EVERYBODY, BACK TO WORK! LEAVE LEATHER LAD ALONE 'TIL HE GETS OFF DEADLINE
SKRULLS LEVEL MIDTOWN
OH NO... THAT'S WHO I AM...?

MEANWHILE...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU WON'T TAKE THE JOB?
C'MON OWL... YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE ABSORBING MAN. HE FOUGHT THOR AND WALKED AWAY. THE MONEY YOU'RE OFFERING'S GREAT, BUT I WANT TO SPEND IT ON MORE'N A NICE FUNERAL.
KRUNCH
THESE PUNKS!
ANY LUCK GETTING BULLSEYE'S NUMBER?
SORRY, BOSS, NO WORD BACK YET.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I MADE ALL THIS MONEY, BUT CAN'T BUY DECENT PROTECTION.
I THINK WE NEED TO GO AFTER SOME REAL HEAVY HITTERS, BOSS.
LIKE WHO?
I'M THINKING... THANOS. OR LOKI.
WHO HAS BEATEN THIS GUY?
I GUESS THERE'S ONLY ONE CHOICE...
YEAH...? YOU THINK THEY'LL TAKE A CHECK? OR CASH?
I'M SURROUNDED BY IDIOTS. I CAN'T BELIEVE CREEL KILLED MY ONE SMART ASSOCIATE...
FINALLY, A GOOD QUESTION. HMMMM...THOR HASN'T BEEN SEEN IN FOREVER. THE HULK IS TOO UNPREDICTABLE.
I WOULD CONSIDER PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, BUT THE AVENGERS DON'T EVEN EXIST ANYMORE.


TWO HOURS LATER...
KEEP OUT
ARE YOU SURE THEY'RE GONNA BE THERE, BOSS?
I MEAN, I'D HATE FOR YOU TO EXIT THE VEHICLE AND THE ABSORBING MAN'S WAITIN' FOR YA.
S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS ARE TRAINED IN STEALTH. BUT STILL... WHY DON'T YOU GET OUT FIRST?
NO, CREEL. BUT NO COPS EITHER.
NOK NOK
C'MON OUT, OWL. I'M ALL YOU GOT.
WHERE ARE THE S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS?
ARE YOU HYDRA? AIM? FIN FANG FOOM? NOPE. YOU'RE SOME LOCAL HOOD WITH A BAD HAIRDO AND POINTY TEETH. YOUR REQUEST TO TURN IN STATE'S EVIDENCE GOT KICKED DOWN TO PROPER AUTHORITIES FOR A BAD GUY WITH YOUR LACK OF IMPORTANCE.
UFF! LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CAN'T STOP CREEL.
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE, SMARTY PANTS. I HAVE A PLAN. AND I'M THE ONLY GUY FAST ENOUGH TO PULL IT OFF.
"PLAN"? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
OWL!!!
RIGHT ON CUE!
YOU WERE USING ME AS BAIT!

SMART ENOUGH TO FIND US, DUMB ENOUGH TO LET US GET AWAY. WHY DON'T YOU ABSORB A DOLPHIN OR SOMETHING ELSE SMARTER THAN YOU?
WHUMP
CRASH
YOU THINK THAT LITTLE DOOR IS GONNA STOP ME? AND YOU CALL ME STUPID?
HA! WAS THIS YOUR BIG TRAP? STEEL SPIKES?
STOP RUNNIN', YA CHICKEN!
KRACK
WHERE THE HECK ARE YA?

UP HERE, METAL HEAD!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS STUFF IS...BUT IT AIN'T STOPPIN' ME.
WHATEVER YOU THROW AT ME, I CAN USE IT AGAINST YOU.
OH YEAH, WHAT ABOUT THIS?
YA KIDDING ME. WHAT'S THE BIG DE--
WHOOSH
--AGK!
...HEY ...I FEEL FUNNY.
OH MAN! GOTTA MOVE FAST!
WHOOM


FIVE MINUTES LATER...
CRAZY STUNT, BUT IT WORKED.
HUH? I CAN'T HEAR A THING!
HOW'D YOU KNOW CREEL WOULDN'T KNOW THOSE TWO CHEMICALS COULDN'T MIX WITHOUT EXPLODING?
EASY. HE WAS DUMB.
OF COURSE, I VOLUNTEERED TO GO THROUGH WITH THIS COCKAMAMIE PLAN ONCE I TOLD IT TO YOU GUYS, SO I'M NOT MUCH SMARTER.
YEAH, WELL... WE'VE GOT A CLEANUP TEAM COMING.
GREAT. JUST KEEP THOSE 'COPTER BLADES SPINNING. THAT'LL DISSIPATE HIS PARTICLES FAR ENOUGH AWAY SO WHEN HE RE-FORMS I'LL BE RETIRED IN FLORIDA.
HOW ABOUT A... HOLD ON...
--GOTTA RUN. THERE'S SOME NUT IN BLACK LEATHER AND A CAPE TRYING TO BREAK INTO THE BAXTER BUILDING IT'S ALL OVER THE NEWS
SHEESH... I THINK THAT ONE'S MINE, TOO.
I'M GONNA NEED BACKUP FOR THIS ONE. GOT A PHONE ON THIS THING?

RICHARDS-? ARE YOU THERE? WE NEED TO TALK!
YOU ARE AN UNAUTHORIZED VISITOR TO THE BAXTER BUILDING. STAND BACK OR DEFENSIVE MEASURES WILL PROCEED.
I NEED SOME INFORMATION. YOU CAN'T CALL ME A SKRULL AND GET AWAY WITH IT.
DEFENSIVE MEASURES STARTING IN 5, 4, 3, 2...
ZZZZZZZZAT
RICHARDS... [illegible] SHOW YOURSELF...
--OR I'LL TEAR THIS PLACE APART!

WHAM
OH WELL, REED ALWAYS NEEDED MORE LIGHT IN HERE ANYWAY...
DON'T GO ANY FURTHER, ETHAN. IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SET THINGS RIGHT.
WHOA! ZOOM IN ON THE GUY IN THE LEATHERS
AVENGERS TOWER...
OUR EYE-IN-THE-SKY NEWSCENTER 'COPTER, WITH THIS JUST IN: WE DON'T KNOW WHO THIS MASKED MAN IS WHO'S LAID SIEGE TO THE BAXTER BUILDING, BUT HE SEEMS TO BE VERY POWERFUL INDEED...

AMAZINGLY ENOUGH, HE SEEMS TO BE FIGHTING SIX SUPER-POWERED HEROES AT ONCE!
JARVIS...?
THE FANTASTIC FOUR DON'T APPEAR TO BE HOME, BUT THEY CERTAINLY SEEM TO BE NEEDED IN THIS BATTLE
MA'AM?
JARVIS, LOOK AT HIM..HIS FACE HE'S CONFUSED, ANGRY, BUT HE'S NO MONSTER HE'S JUST A BOY, LIKE PETER. PERHAPS I SHOULD...
I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY, MA'AM.
WHOA! WHO CAN STOP THIS GUY!?
ETHAN, STOP IT! THIS ISN'T YOU--I KNOW IT!

I TOLD YOU, HUMAN, IT'S TIL--UNF!
THWIP
THWIP
"HUMAN"? AND WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
A MURDEROUS SKRULL--OR DIDN'T YOU HEAR!?
SPLUNCH
WHAK
YOU OKAY...?
'BOUT AS GOOD AS YOU.
THAT BAD, HUH?
DINC
WHO--?
SON, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU DON'T WANT TO HURT THESE GOOD PEOPLE.
"SON"...?

WHAT'S THE MATTER, SON? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? TALK TO ME?
I-I...
STAND DOWN...LET'S PLAY THIS OUT...
I'M A MONSTER!
NO. I'VE SEEN MY SHARE OF MONSTERS, SON. AND YOU'RE NO MONSTER.
SHE'S RIGHT, ETHAN. YOU'RE A MAN. A GOOD MAN.
REALLY...?
SURE. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU CAME FROM. IT DOESN'T CHANGE WHO YOU ARE
I MEAN, DIDN'T YOU SEE "SHREK"...?
LISTEN, ETHAN: YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING THAT NO ONE ELSE HERE HAS. A GIFT TO HEAL.
AND THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO NEED HEALING.

THE BAXTER BUILDING. THE NEXT MORNING...
...I WANT TO THANK YOU ALL FOR DEFENDING OUR HOME WHILE WE WERE AWAY.
YA DID PRETTY GOOD, WEB-HEAD--EVEN THOUGH YOU NEEDED A LITTLE OLD LADY TO BAIL YOU OUT.
PSHAW, IT WAS NOTHING!
SPEAKING OF WHOM...JUST WHO WAS THAT LITTLE OLD LADY...?
ER...
UH M...
UH...
DAILY
GRANNY TO THE RESCUE!
MYSTERY WOMAN SAVES THE DAY AT BAXTER BUILDING!
?
PROBABLY JUST SOME OLD BROAD WITH A TV AND A SENSE OF CIVIC DUTY.
SO WHERE'S ETHAN NOW?
SAID HE WANTED TO PUT HIS HEALING POWER TO GOOD USE.
"HEALING POWER"...?
YEAH, BUT YOU KNEW THAT, REED.

UH...I DOUBLE-CHECKED ALL OF THE PROGRAMMING THE SKRULL SHIP GAVE HIM, SPIDER-MAN.
THERE'S NOTHING REMOTELY LIKE THAT IN HIS ENHANCED ABILITIES.
THEN...
"...WHERE DID HE GET THE POWER?"
Believe
THE END